

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 MCT-01 SY-05 USSS-00 TRSE-00 EURE-00
DHA-05 ACDA-07 COME-00 /077 W
-----078862 131807Z /45

P R 131734Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1381
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: SCHLEYER CASE ENTERS ITS EIGHTH DAY

REF: BONN 14690

1. HANNS MARTIN SCHLEYER WAS SEIZED ALMOST EIGHT DAYS
AGO. HIS ABDUCTION HAS DOMINATED ALL MEDIA DISCUSSION
IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, DESPITE RECENT EFFORTS TO IMPOSE
A NEWS BLACKOUT. AS OF NOON SEPTEMBER 13, FRG AUTHORI-
TIES BELIEVE THAT SCHLEYER IS STILL ALIVE. THEY HAVE
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FOUND AN APPARENTLY WORKABLE PRIVATE CHANNEL OF COMMUNI-
CATION WITH THE TERRORISTS IN SWISS LAWYER PAYOT, AND
THEY CONTINUE TO PLAY FOR TIME. THEIR TACTIC IS TO DRAW
OUT THE NEGOTIATION SO AS TO AVOID THE TERRIBLE CHOICE
WHICH SCHLEYER'S CASE PRESENTS AND PERHAPS TO LEARN HIS
WHEREABOUTS.

2. POLITICAL FALLOUT FROM THE SCHLEYER CASE IS PERVASIVE AND MOUNTING. THERE HAS BEEN A SURGE, PROMPTED LARGELY BY TALK IN CSU CIRCLES, OF PUBLIC INTEREST IN REINTRODUCING THE DEATH PENALTY TO DETER POLITICAL TERRORISM. (PRESENTLY, ARTICLE 102 OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION RULES OUT USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY.) ON THE WHOLE, HOWEVER, WE SENSE LITTLE PUBLIC HYSTERIA OVER THIS LATEST EXAMPLE OF BRUTAL TERRORISM.

3. IN THE LONGER RUN, THE SCHLEYER ABDUCTION WILL REOPEN A MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUE WHICH HAS EXISTED FOR YEARS BETWEEN THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION AND THE SPD/FDP COALITION. IN BRIEF, THE OPPOSITION HOLDS THAT THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED TO CRACK DOWN FIRMLY ON TERRORISM, AND HAS FOSTERED A CLIMATE IN WHICH TERRORISTS CAN OPERATE WITH EASE. GOVERNMENT PARTIES REJECT THIS SIMPLISTIC NOTION OF TERRORISM, BUT ARE MOVING TO STRENGTHEN THEIR ARSENAL OF MEASURES TO COMBAT IT.

4. THE CRISIS ATMOSPHERE HAS MUTED RECENT BUNDESTAG DEBATES. IN DISCUSSING DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC ISSUES LAST WEEK, SPEAKERS FROM ALL PARTIES HELD THEIR POLEMICAL PUNCHES TO A MARKED DEGREE. THE SAME RESTRAINT MAY NOT HOLD WHEN CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT DELIVERS HIS GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON SEPTEMBER 15. THE ENSUING PLENARY DEBATE WILL GIVE THE OPPOSITION A CHANCE TO BLAST THE GOVERNMENT'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENT, AND--SUBJECT TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SCHLEYER CASE--IT IS LIKELY TO DO SO.

5. AT PRESENT, BOTH CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL AND CSU CHAIRMAN STRAUSS ARE ATTENDING MEETINGS OF THE ALL-PARTY CRISIS STAFF IN BONN. THEY ARE ALSO PREPARING THEMSELVES FOR EVENTUAL CRITICISM OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT HAS HANDLED THE SCHLEYER CASE IN PARTICULAR,

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DHA-05 ACDA-07 COME-00 /077 W

-----078957 131809Z /45

P R 131734Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1382

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AND THE MENACE OF TERRORISM IN GENERAL.

A. UNDER PRESSURE FROM RIGHTWING SENTIMENT TO

"SEIZE THE INITIATIVE" AGAINST TERRORISM, KOHL

CONTINUES TO CALL FOR MORE VIGOROUS LAW-AND-ORDER

MEASURES. HE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT, BY SEPTEMBER 26,

THE CDU AND CSU WILL PREPARE NEW ANTI-TERRORISM

MEASURES GOING BEYOND THOSE WHICH THEY HAVE ALREADY

PROPOSED IN THE BUNDESTAG.

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B. THE CSU HAS IN EFFECT WASHED ITS HANDS OF

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OUTCOME OF THE SCHLEYER CASE.

MEETING IN MUNICH YESTERDAY, THE PARTY REPORTEDLY

ISSUED A STATEMENT WHICH SAID THAT THE OPPOSITION

AND THE MENACE OF TERRORISM IN GENERAL.

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B. THE CSU HAS IN EFFECT WASHED ITS HANDS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OUTCOME OF THE SCHLEYER CASE. MEETING IN MUNICH YESTERDAY, THE PARTY REPORTEDLY ISSUED A STATEMENT WHICH SAID THAT THE OPPOSITION VIEWS THE CRISIS STAFF (1) AS A MEANS TO HANDLE OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS IN THE SCHLEYER CASE BUT (2) NOT AS A WAY TO SPREAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVENTS WHICH THE "FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND COALITION PARTIES" HAVE FOSTERED BY THEIR POLICIES, AND FOR WHICH THEY ALONE ARE RESPONSIBLE.

6. THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE SCHLEYER CASE ON THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT IS NOT YET CLEAR, AND WILL DEPEND IN LARGE MEASURE ON TWO DEVELOPMENTS. ONE IS OF COURSE THE HANDLING AND OUTCOME OF THE CASE ITSELF. THE OTHER WILL BE HOW BOTH SCHMIDT AND THE OPPOSITION, IN THE WEEKS AHEAD, APPROACH THE FINE LINE BETWEEN TOO MUCH AND TOO LITTLE IN THE WAY OF MEASURES TO COMBAT TERRORISM, A QUESTION THAT IS EMERGING AS A MAJOR NATIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISSUE.

7. THE MOST DISTURBING ASPECT OF THIS CASE IS THE TENDENCY OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, AND INDEED OF SOME GERMANS AS WELL, TO VIEW RECENT TERRORIST ATTACKS AS A FORERUNNER OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE FRG SYSTEM, A LA WEIMAR. IN OUR VIEW, THIS COMPARISON IS WRONG. BONN IS NOT WEIMAR, DESPITE THE SCHLEYER ABDUCTION AND OTHER TERRORIST ASSAULTS. THESE ASSAULTS, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE A GREAT IMPACT ON PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICAL PARTIES, HAVE NOT ERODED THE STABILITY OF THIS COUNTRY. MEEHAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, ARRESTS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BONN15026
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770331-1065
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BONN 14690
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1300248
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SCHLEYER CASE ENTERS ITS EIGHTH DAY
TAGS: PINT, GE, (SCHLEYER, HANS MARTIN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0a4e0548-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009